



Greetings from the Black River State Forest! The year 2007 marks an important date for our area as we celebrate the state forest's 50th anniversary. As part of this commemoration a monthly informational column will be written. Topics will include the history, natural features, recreational opportunities, issues facing the property, and notice of special events.

Two events important to the state forest are on the horizon. Currently the Division of Forestry is working on the new master plan for the property. The master plan will guide management on the state forest for the next 15 years. This past year we have been gathering background information necessary for this document. This includes a regional analysis which describes the property, it uses, and its biological capacity. This information along with input gathered from the public will be critical in writing the new master plan. There will be a total of three public meetings before the plan can be accepted. As soon as a date is finalized for the first meeting we will let you know.

The second upcoming event is the annual candlelight ski. This will be held on Saturday February 3, 2007 at the Smrekar Trail parking lot. This year's event will feature a new facility. For the past year the Black River Forest Trail Foundation has been working on a new warming house at the Smrekar trail head. The cabin is an attractive log sided structure with tables, benches, and a wood burning stove. During the ski season the building will be open to the public.

The impetus for this new building was a generous donation from the estate of Martin "Marty" Dehnert. Marty was a frequent user of the State Forest's trail system both as a skier, hiker, and a biker. Marty was also a member of the Black River Forest Trail Foundation, a Friends organization that works to improve and create awareness of the Forest's trail system. Such groups are of great benefit to State Forests and Parks, and the new warming house is a positive example of this.

The candlelight ski will begin at 6:00 p.m. with 1.5 miles of lighted trails. Attendees will be able to warm themselves by the bonfire and hotdogs and refreshments will be available for purchase. The Smrekar Trail parking lot is located four miles east of Millston off County Road O.

If you have any questions about this article or the State Forest please call us at (715) 284-1403.